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UNCLAS TAIPEI 003123

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE: RESEARCH ON LOCAL USE OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

REF: SECSTATE 131291

[1](#)1. Summary: A broad survey of Taipei retail groceries shows that most products marked with the geographic indicators (GI) listed in reftel are actually from the region implied by the name. The biggest "offenders" in Taiwan are imported cheeses. Taiwan's Intellectual Property Office has responded to calls from the EU to enforce existing legislation to protect GI. Taiwan also has its own geographic indicators that could lead some policymakers to support the EU's proposal to further restrict use of generic geographic indicators. End Summary.

[1](#)2. AIT/T Econ staff conducted an unscientific survey of six retail grocery outlets in the Taipei area, ranging from the up-scale (Jason's and City-Super) to the average (Wellcome and SongQing), and including discount retailer Carrefour and warehouse store COSTCO. One wine, a Bourgogne found in Wellcome that was allegedly produced in the United States, did not comply with expected GI. Our survey found that many popular cheeses found in all stores except COSTCO used GIs that were contrary to the true origin of the product. These products included Feta from the U.S., Denmark and Australia, Parmigiano Reggiano from the U.S. and New Zealand, Mozzarella from the U.S., Australia, and Denmark, and Pecorino Romano from the U.S. Our survey also found Prosciutto de Parma from the U.S. and Australia, and Kalamata olives from Australia.

[1](#)3. Taiwan has its own geographic indicators that Taiwan producers actively use to promote their own products. Alishan tea is famous in Taiwan and Mainland China and commands a premium from tea drinkers. "Taiwan" is used to identify everything from beer to vermicelli noodles. TIPO has in the past been approached by EU representatives in Taiwan to support increased protections for GI, most recently in the 2002 European Chamber of Commerce and Trade White Paper. That document encouraged the Taiwan authorities to take increased actions to enforce rules related to GI and age of alcohols. This recommendation has not been repeated in subsequent ECCT White papers.
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